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OTPAWA is the seat of justice of La Salle
county; is situated at the junction of the Fox river
with the Illinois, 290 miles by water, from Saint
Louis, and mid-way between Chicago and Peoria.

"OUR JESSIE;" Or, The Exclusives.

BY MISS EMMA C. EMBURY.

"Lizzy, who was that pretty girl that
I met on the stairs this morning?" said
Frederick Carlton, as he threw himself
into a well cushioned chair beside his
sister's; "she was some intimate friend,
I presume, for she went into your apart-
ment."

"I suppose it was Sarah Morton, as
she is the only person I am in the habit
of admitting to my dressing room; was
she very pretty?"

"Beautiful."

"How was she dressed?"

"With the utmost simplicity and neat-
ness."

"It must have been Sarah; she dresses
with great taste. Did the lady you met
wear a black velvet mantilla, with a white
hat and willow feather?"

"Pshaw! black velvet fiddlestick. Do
you call that simplicity? No, the lovely
creature I mean, wore a little straw bon-
net and a black silk apron; her dark hair
was parted smoothly upon her snowy
forehead; she had soft blue eyes, and a
mouth like an opening rose-bud; now,
can you tell me who she is?"

"Oh," exclaimed Lizzy, "it must have
been our Jessie."

"And pray, who is 'our Jessie?'" asked
her brother.

"Only our seamstress, Fred; a pretty
little creature, who looks scarcely six-
teen."

"By Jupiter! if that girl is a seam-
stress. Fortune never made a greater
mistake—it can't be."

"Well, we can decide the matter,
Fred; Jessie is now at work in our little
sewing room, and as I am going up to
give her some directions, you can accom-
pany me."

Frederick Carlton obeyed his sister's
suggestion, and sauntered into the room
half hoping his sister was mistaken. But
no; there sat the object of his admira-
tion—there sat *our Jessie*, surrounded by
the pieces and patches, shaping and sew-
ing with the utmost diligence, and scarce-
ly raising her eyes from her work. Seem-
ing herself at a little distance, under
pretence of waiting his sister's leisure,
Frederick busied himself in studying the
countenance of the unconscious girl.

"Her features are not perfectly regu-
lar," thought he; "but what soft eyes
she has; what a lovely mouth, and how
beautifully her fine forehead shines out
between those bands of raven hair; her
voice too, is soft and low, an excellent
thing in women."—What a pity such a
creature should be the slave of fashiona-
ble tyrants."

"Tell me," said he to his eldest sister,
Mrs. De Grey, as he returned to the din-
ing room, "tell me who is 'our Jessie?'"

"Her story is soon told," said Mrs.
De Grey, laughing, "and for your sake,
my susceptible brother, I am sorry she
is not a heroine of romance. Jessie
Murray's father was a printer, who, meet-
ing with a severe accidental injury was
confined to his bed for several years be-
fore his death, during which time his
wife supported the family by seamstress
work and dress making. Mr. Murray
was always a reading man, and after he
was disabled, he devoted his weary
hours by books and the education of his
children. I have been told that he stud-
ied Latin and Greek, in order that he
might teach his son, and thus fit him if
possible for college, while he carefully
instructed Jessie in all the branches he
deemed essential to a good education.
After the father's death which occurred
not long since, when Jessie was about
eighteen years of age, she determined to
fulfil his wishes respecting her young
brother, and secure for him a collegiate
education. She therefore adopted her
present employment; she is a neat seam-
stress and an excellent dress-maker. Her
services are highly estimated and she

works for a few customers who engage
her, as we do, for several months togeth-
er. Her brother entered college last fall,
and she is at all the expense of his edu-
cation."

"What a noble-minded girl she must
be, to submit to a life of drudgery for
such a purpose."

"She is the more praise-worthy, Fred,
because she could have obtained a situa-
tion as nursery-governess, which accord-
ing to modern notions, would have been
far less degrading; but she refused it
because it prevented her from returning
every night to her mother."

"Is she always cheerful and good hu-
mored?"

"She has one of the most winning
manners I ever knew."

"She must be a lovely creature."

"Yes, it is a pity to see so much beau-
ty and grace wasted in humble life."

"But why need it be wasted, Julia?"

"Because she will, in all probability,
marry some rough mechanic, who will
never perceive her grace, and scarcely
appreciate her beauty."

"Do you suppose, then, that personal
beauty is not appreciated by the poor as
well as the rich, Julia?"

"Yes; but only certain kinds of beau-
ty; a healthy coarse red cheek, and a
bold bright eye, are the charms most ad-
mired among the plebeians."

"Julia, what are you talking about?"

"Are Americans running mad? Here
have I returned to my native country
after an absence of only five years, and
while my love for republican institutions
has increased ten fold, I find my country-
men have become perfectly beside them-
selves in their aping of foreign follies.
Plebeians—forsooth!—and pray, who
are the patricians of this most democra-
tic community?"

"Why, Fred, there must be a differ-
ence between the upper and lower classes
in all communities."

"Yes, Julia, the difference between
the good and the wicked, the honest and
dishonest, the educated and the ignorant,
the governors and the governed—"

"You forget the principal distinction,
Frederick: the rich and the poor."

"Aye, I thought so; that is the principal
distinction in modern times, and of
course the rich is the patrician, though he
may have raked his wealth from the ken-
nel; and the poor man is a plebeian,
though his ancestors should have been
among the only American nobles—the
signers of our independence."

"Oh, no, brother, you are quite wrong;
a mechanic, though he be as rich as
Cæsar, cannot get into good society;
but if he abandon his business before his
children are grown up, they are received,
and his grand children finally rank
amongst our first classes."

"Provided they retain their fortunes,
for which their grand father toiled, I sup-
pose, Julia. Well, I am glad to have
the matter so satisfactorily explained, es-
pecially as we are the children of a me-
chanic."

"Heaven! Fred, how can you say so?
Our father was an India merchant."

"True, my high-minded sister, but he
began life in a cooper's shop down on the
wharf, where he afterwards built his state-
ly stores. Many a good barrel has he
headed and hooped; and I remember
when a very little boy, how I loved to
play in the shavings. But that is thirty
years ago, Julia, and I suppose you think
other people have forgotten it."

"I wish, Fred, that you could forget
it.—It is not pleasant to have such things
brought to light so late in the day. They
cannot injure you nor me, but they may
mar Lizzy's prospects."

"True, Lizzy might not be allowed to
marry a mechanic's grand son, if it were
known that she was only a mechanic's
daughter."

Frederick Carlton, with some eccen-
tricity, possessed many excellent quali-
ties. His father had bestowed on him
all the advantages of a liberal education,
and after completing his studies he had
spent several years in Europe. While
abroad his father died, and his eldest sister
married, so on his return he found the
old family mansion passed into other
hands, and his favorite sister Lizzy, an
inmate of Julia's stately mansion. His
paternal inheritance insured him a compe-
tence, and he resolved to marry as soon
as he should meet with a woman capable
of realizing his notions of domestic hap-
piness. It is not to be supposed that the
rich and travelled Mr. Carlton, (whose
three thousand dollars of yearly income
was more than doubled by many-tongued
rumor,) lacked opportunities of selecting
a companion for life. But among the
maneuvering mammas and displaying
daughters, he had as yet seen no one
who equalled his ideas of womanly love-
liness. A true American in feeling, he
had lived long enough in foreign follies
to despise them most heartily and especi-

ally did he abhor this attempt to estab-
lish an exclusive system in society. "I
am no agrarian," he would often say,
"nor have I any utopian notions of per-
fect equality; I am therefore aware that
there must always exist different classes
in society, such as working men and men
of wealth, men gifted with intellect, and
others only one remove from idocy, but
let us never acknowledge that worst of
all tyrannies, an oligarchy of mere wealth.
A man of enlightened mind and virtuous
principles is my equal, whatever be his
occupation, and whether his hands be
hardened by the blacksmith's hammer, or
soiled by the ink of the learned profes-
sions, it is one which I can grasp with
respect."

His notions much displeased his fasti-
dious sisters, and they took great pains
to convince him of his folly. But it was
in vain that they tried to initiate him into
the mysteries of modern fashion; he
would neither conceal his face beneath an
overgrowth of moustache and beard, nor
would he imitate the long-eared asses of
South America in the longitude of his
superb raven locks. He even refused to
carry the indispensable cane, alleging
that such a sudden lameness had fallen
upon the spindle shanked men of fashion,
it was the duty of those who could still
boast of some *solidity* of understanding
to depend upon themselves for support.
The ladies pronounced him very hand-
some, but shocking unfashionable; while
the gentlemen, who found that his ren-
dell was not likely to be diminished either
at the billiard table or the race course,
discussed his character as they picked
their teeth on the steps of the Broadway
hotels, and wondered how he contrived
to spend his money.

The simple story of Jessie Murray
had deeply affected Carlton, and the
remembrance of her sweet countenance
did not tend to decrease his interest.
How much of self mingles in the best
feelings of humanity! Had Jessie been a
freckled, red haired, snub-nosed girl,
Fred, would probably have soon forgotten
her sisterly devotion, but she was too
pretty to vanish quickly from his mind.
Some how or other it happened almost
every morning that he found it necessary
to see his sisters at an early hour, when
he was sure of finding them in the sew-
ing room. His presence became at
length quite unheeded by Jessie as well
as his sisters, and while he amused him-
self in romping with his little nephew, or
quizzing the changes of fashion which
usually occupied his sister's thoughts, he
had constant opportunity of studying the
character of "our Jessie!" He noticed
her quiet good sense, her fine taste, her
cheerful manners, her unaffected humil-
ity, the patience with which she bore the
caprices of his sisters, and he repeated to
himself again and again, "What a pity
she should be obliged to lead such a life."

One winter evening, as he was hur-
rying to an appointment, he met Jessie,
who, with her bonnet thrown over her
face, and her cloak wrapped closely
around her, was hastening in an opposite
direction. To turn and join her was his
first impulse.

"Where are you going at so late an
hour, Miss Murray?" he asked.

"Home," she replied, still hurrying
onward.

"At least allow me to accompany you,"
said he.

"Oh, no, sir," said she, "it is not ne-
cessary. I go home alone every night."

"But you are liable to insult, and should
not go home without a protector."

"We, poor girls, are obliged to be our
own protectors, Mr. Carlton," said Jessie.
"When my mother is well, she usually
comes to meet me; but in such cold
weather I do not wish to risk her health."

"And your brother?"

"He is at New Haven college, sir.
Mr. Carlton, let me beg you not to go
out of your way for me."

Fred only answered by drawing her
arm through his. Jessie at first seemed
alarmed but, reassured by his respectable
manner, she consented to accept his es-
cort, and they soon reached her mother's
door. The light of a cheerful fire gleamed
through the half opened shutters; and
as Fred looked in the room, he could not
avoid noticing the perfect neatness of
its arrangement. But Jessie did not in-
vite him to enter, and he unwillingly
bade her good night, though he had a
strong desire to take a seat beside that
humble hearth. When next he met his
sisters, he told them of his adventure,
and asked why they did not send a ser-
vant with the little seamstress.

"Lord, brother, what an idea!" ex-
claimed Lizzy. "I am sure she can take
care of herself!"

"Should you feel quite safe, Lizzy, if
you were sent out to walk a mile at 8
o'clock on a winter's night?"

"No; but I have always been accus-
tomed to a protector. Such poor girls
as Jessie early learn to take care of them-
selves, and do not feel the same fear as
ladies do!"

"For shame!" exclaimed Frederick,
"do you suppose that poverty blunts
every perception, and destroys every de-
licate feeling. Faith I believe the poor
girl is more favored than the rich in such
respects, for I don't know one of your
fashionable friends, Lizzy, who would
shrink from taking my arm as modestly
as 'our Jessie' did last night?"

"Did you really give Jessie your arm,
and escort her home?"

"I did; and when I saw the quiet,
pleasant little parlor which she called
home, I had a great mind to offer her my
hand as well as my arm."

"Frederick! are you losing your sen-
ses? If I did not know you were jest-
ing, I should think you had been taking
too much wine!"

"I never was in a sounder state of
mind, my dear sisters, and yet I declare
to you I have a great mind to make little
Jessie your sister-in-law—that is, if she
will accept me."

"Come, come, Fred," interposed Mrs.
De Grey, "you are carrying the faze
too far; Lizzy is ready to cry with vexa-
tion."

"For heaven's sake do not be such a
fool; a pretty business it would be to in-
troduce one of our hirelings as my sister.
No, no, Fred, that won't do."

"You need not introduce her if you
are ashamed of her. I dare say we
should find society without your aid."

"How so?"

"Why, do you suppose her rich ad-
mirer, Charles Tibbs, would marry the
sister of a man whose wife had once been
a seamstress?"

Frederick laughed heartily as he re-
plied: "True, I had forgotten; Charles
Tibbs, is the grand son of old Toney
Tibbs, who used to peddle essences
about the streets, and of course is now
good society. Well, I will not interfere
with Lizzy's matrimonial speculations,
so banish your fears."

"Oh, I have no fears about it, for with
all your eccentricities, I am sure you
would never do any thing so degrading."

Notwithstanding her boasted confi-
dence, however, Mrs. De Grey really
felt considerable anxiety about the matter,
and she determined to send Jessie out
of the way, until her brother should have
forgotten his transient fancy. Convinced
that Jessie was utterly unconscious of
Frederick's admiration, and unwilling to
lose her services permanently, she thought
of a plan which promised success, and
she consulted Lizzy as to its possibility.

"Aunt Tabitha has sent us as to pro-
cure her a seamstress for a few weeks;
suppose we induce Jessie to do it? The
poor thing needs country air, and because
we need her absence?"

"Nay, Lizzy, it is no laughing mat-
ter.—I want to send her out of Fred's
way before she has any suspicion of his
folly."

"But why send her to Aunt Tabitha?"

"Because Fred will never find her
there; he is so terribly afraid of the old
lady's *sentimentalities* that he never
visits her, and by the time Jessie re-
turns, he will have some new folly to en-
gage his attention."

The plan was matured; and Jessie,
who really felt the need of change of air,
or relaxation from her continual labors,
consented to leave her mother for a few
weeks.—Accordingly, one bright spring
morning, a stage deposited Jessie at the
gate of a neat old fashioned cottage,
which stood on the outskirts of a village
about forty miles from the great me-
tropolis.

"Where is 'our Jessie?'" asked
Fred, when he watched in vain for her
daily return to the little sewing-room.

"Lord, brother, do you think I keep a
record of her engagements? When she
finishes our work she goes somewhere
else, and that is all I know about it."

The idea of that gentle creature being
thus driven about from place to place,
toiling with her needle, and dimming her
bright eyes over platts and gathers, was
extremely painful to Fred Carlton. The
more he thought of it, the more uneasy
he became. "Why should I hesitate?"
thought he. "I have seen all the pretti-
est girls of Lizzy's set, and I like Jessie
Murray better than any of them. Seam-
stresses—indeed! I wonder if Julia would
like to hear that our own dear mother
used to make six shillings a day by bind-
ing shoes when she was first married to
the honest cooper, our father? Yet, I
should not like to mar Lizzy's plans;
I wish I had some one to advise me.
Now I think of it, I will go and see
Aunt Tabitha; the dear, good, romantic
old soul whom I used to ridicule so much,
will now be my best counsellor." So,
with his usual impetuosity, Fred started

on a visit to Aunt Tabitha, leaving his
sisters quite ignorant of his destination,
and little dreaming of the unexpected
pleasure that awaited him.

Dear old Aunt Tabitha! what a singu-
lar compound she was of good feelings
and exaggerated sentiments. In early
life she had betrothed to one whose po-
verty was the only obstacle to their union.
He had sailed for India in the hope of
bettering his fortunes, but he never return-
ed, nor did any tidings of his fate ever
reach his native land. The ship was miss-
ing—it had never reached its destined
port, and the sea kept its own secret.
Deeply tinged with the romance of warm-
hearted youth, and greatly addicted to no-
vel reading, Aunt Tabitha had always lived
in a world of the imagination, and the
mystery which overhung the fate of her
lover seemed to strengthen the romantic
fervor of her nature. For some years af-
ter his disappearance she never left her
apartment, and it was only by awakening
the charities of her kind nature that she
could be induced to take an interest in
every day life. She had grown old with-
out having lost one of her early tenden-
cy to sentiment. Combining active benevo-
lence with almost morbid sensibility, she
was often a subject of ridicule to those
who did not know her virtues, while she
was sincerely loved by those who could
forgive eccentricity in behalf of eloquence.
Fred Carlton in his boyish days had con-
ceived a great dislike of her peculiarities,
and, unable then to appreciate her real
goodness, was terribly bored by what he
styled her "*sentimentalities*." But he
had since learned to know her better, and
her very foibles now seemed to render her
better fitted to render him counsel. What
was the result of her advice?

Let us pass over the lapse of three
years, in the course of which Lizzy
Carlton had married the rich and aristo-
cratic Charles Tibbs, who was the very
pique of fashion, excepting his dislike of
perfumes, an antipathy probably owing to
early associations. The sisters were es-
tablished to their hearts' content. A fine
house, French furniture, a splendid car-
riage, and plenty of servants, had fallen
to the lot of both. It is true, the *habitual*
failings of Julia's husband made him a
bye word among the honorable men, and
Charles Tibbs was a mere nonentity—the
very "essence" of insipidity; but these
were no drawbacks upon the felicity of
women of fashion. Fred Carlton was
residing in Paris, the happy husband of a
charming woman, enjoying all the pleas-
ures of that gay city. Had he so soon
forgotten our Jessie?

One morning Lizzy entered her sister's
room with an open letter in her hand, ex-
claiming, "Oh, Julia, I have got news for
you; Fred is coming, and his Parisian
wife will just arrive in time to add bril-
liancy to our winter parties."

Julia shrugged her shoulders. "I
hope it may be so, Lizzy; but Fred is
such a queer fellow that he is quite likely
to have some dowdy of a wife, whom we
shall be ashamed to introduce."

"Oh no," exclaimed Lizzy, "I have
seen Mrs. Grantham, who is just return-
ed from Paris, and who saw Fred's wife
very often in society; she says Mrs.
Carlton was quite the fashion. They
were wearing bonnets a la Carlton,
redingotes a la Carlton, mantillas a la
Carlton; in short, there was no limit to
the admiration she was exciting. The
Duke of Orleans had asked her name, as
he met her in his daily rides, and expres-
sed himself in very decided terms respect-
ing her beauty; the Duke of Nemours
has danced with her at a ball, given at
the Tuilleries, and she has even sung a duet
with the Princess Clementine, at one of
the royal soirees."

"Can it be possible? Well, if that be
the case she will be a great acquisition to
our society—she must be a woman of
some rank to be admitted into such circles
in Paris."

"Mrs. Grantham thinks she is English;
but you know Fred always returned some
quizzing reply to enquiries respecting her,
and we can only learn her origin from her-
self; she is quite distinguished for her
vocal powers, and though little skilled in
instrumental music, creates quite a sensa-
tion by her splendid style of singing.
From all that I can learn, I judge that
Fred has led as eccentric a life abroad as
at home; nobody knew where he was
married, but after living in retirement for
two years after his return to Paris, he
emerged from his seclusion, bringing with
him his lovely and gifted wife."

"Well, we shall know all about her
when they arrive; she will certainly be
the *fashion*, but I should like to know
who she is—however, she is a foreigner,
and that will be sufficient to attract atten-
tion."

A few weeks after Fred Carlton ar-
rived in his native city, and hurried to see

his sisters, whom, in spite of their follies,
he loved.

"Where is your wife?" was the first
question.

"At the Astor House."

"Why don't you bring her to our
house?" asked Mrs. De Grey.

"Because I could not tell whether you
would like to receive her; you know no-
thing about her, and I have not forgotten
your old prejudices."

"Yes; but you certainly could not
doubt of her meeting a warm welcome;
for although we have not seen her, yet
we are not ignorant of her high reputation
for beauty and fashion. We are all im-
patient to greet her, Fred; come let us
go directly to see her."

"First impressions are all important,
and I have no idea of your seeing my
pretty wife when she is looking pale and
travel-worn; I positively forbade her re-
ceiving any visits for three days, because
I want her to appear in all her charms at
Mrs. Grantham's musical soiree next
Tuesday."

"But surely you will allow her to see
her relatives."

"No; you are precisely the persons I
have determined she shall not see, until
she is perfectly well; I want you to do
justice to my choice; she has been much
admired in Paris, and I wish her claims
to be as well established here."

"So, you have become a convert to our
system, brother; and really desire to see
your wife become a woman of fashion."

"I have my reasons, Lizzy; when I
have once seen her enjoying the undispu-
ted possession of your admiration, we
shall retire to our quiet home and laugh
at the follies we now perpetrate."

"Do you suppose your wife will be
content to retire from the gay scenes
which she now adorns?"

"My wife is only obeying my wishes
in leaving the seclusion which she loves;
I have my reasons, I tell you. By the
way, what has become of 'our Jess-
ie?'"

"Ah, Fred, you ought to thank us for
maneuvering you out of that folly; if we
had not sent Jessie out of your way, you
might have been the husband of a little
sewing girl, instead of glorifying in a wife
who claims the praise of princes."

"Perhaps I might, Lizzy; but where
is the pretty seamstress?"

"I don't know; she and her mother
removed from their old residence soon af-
ter you saw her here, and I could discov-
er no trace of them. I suppose she is
the wife of some honest carpenter by this
time. But tell us, Fred, when shall we
see Mrs. Carlton?"

"We will meet you at Mrs. Grantham's
soiree."

"Ah, I see; you think she needs the
accessories of dress. I really believe
you are half ashamed of your wife,
Fred."

"Perhaps I am only ashamed of my
sisters," was the teasing reply, as with a
merry laugh Fred Carlton hurried away.

When the appointed Tuesday arrived,
the sisters, full of curiosity, repaired to
Mrs. Grantham's mansion; but they were
far too fashionable to be punctual, and it
was quite late when they entered the
crowded room. Their steps were arrest-
ed by the sound of a simple prelude upon
the harp; as they paused, just within the
door, a sweet, bird-like voice, filled the
apartment with melody. The song was
the ballad of "Old Robin Grey," which
was then sung, which never fails to thrill
every heart; and as the singer now threw
her whole soul into the mournful strains,
all stood in breathless attention to catch
the exquisite sounds.

"It must be Fred's wife," whispered
Lizzy, as they pressed forward to catch a
glance of the vocalist. But her back
was turned towards them, and they could
only see a sylph-like figure, attired with
the utmost magnificence.

"How do you like your new sister?"
said Mrs. Grantham, as she welcomed
her guests: "is she not all I pictured
her?"

"We have not seen her," was the re-
ply; and at that moment Fred approach-
ed. What was their astonishment when
in the lady who leaned upon his arm, they
discovered "our Jessie."

As he led his wife to a seat beside them,
and listened to their gracious welcome, he
could not forbear whispering to Lizzy,
"You see how much I am indebted to
your maneuvering—the partner of a
royal duke, the belle of a hereditary
prince, the songstress of the royal soirees,
is, still all, only the little *sewing-girl*."

"But where did you marry her?"

"Fred Carlton had devoted the two
first years of his wedded life to the cul-
tivation of his wife's fine musical talents,
and he then brought her into society, de-
termined to try whether beauty, talents,
and grace, were not sufficient claims upon
the admiration of the fashionable world.
He had succeeded even beyond his hopes,